



# The Maryland VETERAN



## Maryland's Commitment to Veterans – Behavioral Health Initiative

*"The most basic obligation of any government is to serve those who have served on our behalf."*

– Lieutenant Governor Anthony Brown

Veterans of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) are invited to connect with an important Initiative; "Maryland's Commitment to Veterans", a "no wrong door" approach to providing information and support to Maryland's veterans

Established through Senate Bill 210, "Maryland's Commitment to Veterans" provides for a three (3) year, statewide outreach effort designed to engage OIF and OEF veterans and their families "where they are". The Initiative will provide the tools and support needed by veterans and family members to regain a healthy equilibrium that can sometimes be disrupted by deployment and repeated deployment overseas. The primary focus of the Initiative is on rural communities where many veterans reside and where fewer comprehensive services exist. Four Regional Resource Coordinators (RRC's) have been employed, trained and stationed across Maryland to facilitate veteran and family access to eligible services with the federal Veterans Administration, specifically in the areas of mental health/well-being and substance abuse services. Recognizing that "systems" and "bureaucracies" can often be confusing or difficult to navigate, the RRC's will act as guides and advocates for timely access to needed VA information and services. Furthermore, should VA services not be readily available, the RRC's will assist the veteran and his/her family member to access support and services from the public and private human service/behavioral health sector at no cost to the veteran.

The legislation also established a State Veterans Behavioral Health Advisory Board chaired by Lt. Governor Anthony Brown. The Board is charged with the identification of gaps

in service provision and to make recommendations to the Governor for action to meet outstanding needs.

The Initiative is a national model pilot program that is being closely watched and monitored by other states. Some states may look to follow Maryland's lead in providing respectful, appropriate and meaningful information and support to veterans. As a member of the veteran community, you can help fellow veterans of Maryland who may not be aware of the Initiative or may be hesitant to access its resources by: 1) sharing this article with them; 2) contacting a Regional Resource Coordinator with questions and/or suggestions at: 1-877-770-4801; 3) providing feedback and suggestions to the Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs at [mdvetveteransinfo@mdva.state.md.us](mailto:mdvetveteransinfo@mdva.state.md.us) or to Laura Copland, MA, Director of Maryland's Commitment to Veterans program at [CoplandL@dhhm.state.md.us](mailto:CoplandL@dhhm.state.md.us).

Please contact "Maryland's Commitment to Veterans" at 1-877-770-4801 for more information or service resources and referral.



Lt. Governor Anthony G. Brown kicks off "Maryland's Commitment to Veterans" at American Legion Post 10 in Boonsboro, MD. Lt. Governor Brown is flanked by Secretary Adkins and members of the Maryland National Guard.

This newsletter highlights those services available to assist Maryland service members and veterans in making the transition FROM BATTLEFIELD AND COMBAT TO COMMUNITY AND HOME

# Maryland Veterans of World War II

## *Maryland Historical Society Exhibition*

*November 11, 2008 – December 31, 2009*

The exhibition opening was celebrated during the Maryland Historical Society's Veterans Day Commemoration Ceremony at which Governor O'Malley gave a tribute to World War II veterans.

Honoring combat veterans from Maryland, who served in every theater of the war, the exhibition displays uniforms, small arms, and equipment authentic to the men who used them, often "personalized" with their own artistic touches. Helmets are inscribed with individual names and unit, and in some cases pierced by shrapnel and bullet holes, while weapons carry the dents and dings of active fighting from the Normandy beaches to Iwo Jima. The material in the exhibition comes primarily from the collection of Colonel (MD) George S. Rich.

The Maryland Historical Society is offering Complimentary Family Memberships to all World War II veterans throughout the run of the exhibition until December 31, 2009. For information call 410-685-3750 or visit [www.mdhs.org](http://www.mdhs.org).



Governor O'Malley and Col. George S. Rich tour the Exhibit.



A Veterans Day Commemoration Ceremony marked the November 11 opening of "Maryland Veterans of World War II." Governor Martin O'Malley is shown with veterans Carlton Bazell (in wheelchair), John Scott Small (in blue shirt) and Ray Snyder (in his original WWI uniform). Boy Scout Troop 1000 from the Cathedral of Mary Our Queen provided the Color Guard and the Baltimore City College Choir the music. Photo courtesy of Christopher Becker, MdHS

## Governor Martin O'Malley

Dear Friends,

As we celebrate the beginning of a new year, Maryland's commitment to our Veterans remains strong. The holiday season is a time when family, friends and neighbors come together in love to celebrate the blessings of this life. During this time, we are especially grateful to be able to welcome the thousands of Maryland soldiers who are returning home from service abroad, and we recognize the dedication and courage of our servicemen and women.

Because the men and women of our Armed Forces have always been there for the people of our State, making tremendous sacrifices so that we can continue to live in peace, we pledge that we will be there for them. We remain committed to addressing the ever-changing needs of Maryland's veteran population, especially those who are currently returning home.

Together, in partnership with the hard working men and women of our Department of Veterans Affairs, we're providing new funding to help veterans get better access to quality behavioral health services and to scholarship programs. In addition, we're working together to help veteran-owned small businesses grow and thrive, and we're strengthening our safety net for those who are unable to find work in these challenging economic times.

Our State and our nation are built upon the hard work, bravery and commitment of the generations of soldiers who have stood up in defense of the principles we hold dear. We owe both our proud history and our promising future to them, and we will continue to support our veterans in gratitude and respect for their service.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Martin O'Malley".

Martin O'Malley, Governor



## A Message from Secretary Adkins

It has been a busy and productive year at the MDVA. In 2009 we will continue to do our best to serve Maryland's 480,000 veterans and their families.

Outreach and Advocacy published a comprehensive booklet on state benefits for Maryland veterans. If you would like a copy please contact us and we can get one to you. We are also conducting Veterans Musters in Maryland counties and Baltimore City to reach more veterans with information on services and benefits available to them. Watch our website or sign up to get email alerts from us.



Secretary Adkins

Maryland had one of the first state veteran cemetery systems in the nation. Today it is one of the most active with over 3000 burials each year. We have implemented, in partnership with the Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Service, a special program for incarcerated veterans. These veterans, who are eligible to be buried in our cemeteries, work at our cemeteries performing a variety of tasks to enhance the appearance of our facilities. We are now able to hire these veterans once they are released which aids their transition back to productive civilian life.

Thanks to Governor O'Malley and Lieutenant Governor Brown we were able to expand our Veterans Service Program with three new offices to help veterans file their VA claims. The office in Bel Air has already opened and we hope to soon complete the hiring process for veterans service officers for the Hagerstown and Charlotte Hall offices. There were over 200 applicants for these positions.

We currently have 390 residents at the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home. It is a great facility and I encourage you to visit their website or the Home when you get a chance.

For hundreds of years we have been fortunate as a nation to have young men and women step forward to serve their nation in uniform. As veterans we have been fortunate that the citizens of Maryland recognize this service by providing state benefits for our veterans. Please do not hesitate to contact my office if you feel we can be of further assistance.

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## Service-Disabled Veteran Business Loans

On December 22, 2008, Lt. Governor Anthony G. Brown, along with the Departments of Business and Economic Development (DBED) and Veterans Affairs (MDVA), announced two recipients of the Military Reservist and Service-Disabled Veteran No-Interest Loan.

National Security Solutions (NSS) and Strategic Services International, Inc. (SSII) both received loans through the program. Both companies are

designated Service Disabled Veteran Owned Small Businesses (SDVOSB) through the federal disadvantaged business enterprise (DBE) program.

To learn more about the Military Reservist and Service-Disabled Veteran No-Interest Loan Program visit our website [www.mdva.state.md.us](http://www.mdva.state.md.us). For more information about the loan recipients check them out on the web at: <http://nss.us.com> and [www.strategicservicesintl.com](http://www.strategicservicesintl.com).

### MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

#### OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

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Wilbert B. Forbes,  
*Deputy Secretary*

#### Outreach & Advocacy

Bob Sharps, *Director*

The Jeffrey Building  
16 Francis Street – 4th Floor  
Annapolis, MD 21401

### BALTIMORE SERVICE CENTER & ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

#### Finance & Personnel

John R. Kearns, *CFO*

#### Claims Assistance & Benefits

Paul M. Prozialeck, *Director*  
Federal Building – Room 3020  
31 Hopkins Plaza  
Baltimore, MD 21201  
Phone: 410-230-4444  
Toll Free: 800-446-4926 x6450  
Fax: 410-230-4445

#### CHARLOTTE HALL VETERANS HOME

Sharon M. Mattia, *Director*  
29449 Charlotte Hall Road  
Charlotte Hall, MD 20622  
Phone: 301-884-8171  
Toll Free: 800-522-8387  
Fax: 301-884-8036

### BOARDS & COMMISSIONS Maryland Veterans Commission

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**Maryland Veterans  
Home Commission**  
Robert M. Johnson, *Chair*

#### The War Memorial Commission

War Memorial Building  
William B. Proctor, *Chair*

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William R. Divelbiss, *President*

#### **CEMETERY & MEMORIAL PROGRAMS**

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Crownsville, MD 21032  
Anne Arundel County  
410-923-6981

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301-372-6398

#### **CROWNSVILLE VETERANS CEMETERY**

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#### **EASTERN SHORE VETERANS CEMETERY**

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410-943-3420  
Toll Free – 866-497-3684

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#### **MEMORIALS**

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Cemetery & Memorial Programs  
Baltimore, MD  
410-354-3550

#### **WAR MEMORIAL BUILDING**

Douglas W. Henley  
*Executive Director*  
Baltimore  
410-396-8013

## **Free Mediation Services Helps Returning Veterans Re-connect with Family and Community**

*By Lorig Charkoudian, Ph.D., Executive Director of Community Mediation Maryland*

Mediation can provide valuable assistance to reintegrate returning Maryland veterans back into their families and communities. According to Pentagon data, nearly half of returning National Guard soldiers report some challenges, such as alcohol and/or drug abuse, excessive anger, sleeplessness and conflict with family members and coworkers. There are additional challenges for service members who have been severely wounded and face long and arduous recovery periods. That and the stress of combat as well as multiple deployments also create issues for service members, their families and employers.

Conflicts or tensions may occur for any of the following reasons:

- Returning veterans may well be exhausted and unable to resume their previous responsibilities in the family, and conflict can result when neither spouse feels that their needs are being met.
- The veteran may want to jump right back into his or her role within the family and may run into conflict if the other spouse has gotten used to managing things alone.
- Children may fear for their deployed parent's safety as well as for themselves since they are made to function without the parent there. Because children may not understand their own emotions, they frequently act out in ways that cause more stress for themselves and their family. When the deployed parent first returns home, everyone anticipates a return to normal, whatever that may mean to each of them, but their expectations may be very different from each others'.

All of the scenarios described above, as well as others, may be addressed through mediation with trained, neutral mediators to assist with creating understanding and resolving disputes. Mediation is available at no cost and at a time and place convenient to participants through Community Mediation Centers located throughout Maryland. To find a center near you, go to [www.mdmediation.org](http://www.mdmediation.org) or call 888-826-2262.

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## **New Program Assists Veterans Applying for Federal Jobs**

The Civilian Personnel Advisory Center (CPAC) at Fort Meade offers a Veterans Employment Assistance Seminar the second Thursday of each month. All appointments are on a first come first serve basis. To receive information on: resume preparation through the Civilian Personnel On-Line (CPOL) website; Veterans Recruit-

ment Appointments (VRA); Veterans Employment Opportunities Act (VEOA); and 30 Percent Plus Disabled Veterans employment opportunities contact the CPAC at 301-677-6526.

To reserve a seat for the seminars please email Mr. Ty C. Guda, Human Resources Specialist at [ty.guda.chandler@us.army.mil](mailto:ty.guda.chandler@us.army.mil).

## MDVA Staff Update

**M**DVA is pleased to announce Ms. Cate Conroy as the new Deputy Director of Outreach & Advocacy and Mr. Michael Farr as the new Deputy Director for the Veterans Home Program.

### Cate Conroy

Cate Conroy was welcomed as the new Deputy Director of Outreach & Advocacy on November 13, 2008. Ms. Conroy comes to us after ten years at the Office of the Public Defender for Baltimore City.

Ms. Conroy received her Bachelor of Arts in geography from the University of South Florida and her Juris Doctor from the University of Maryland School of Law. Prior to college Ms. Conroy served in the United States Army as an aircraft crewman for both AH-1 Cobra and AH-64 Apache helicopters. During her service with the 1st Infantry Division Ms. Conroy was deployed to Saudi Arabia and participated in Desert Shield and Desert Storm. She is a member of the Society of the 1st Infantry Division and the Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation.

### Michael Farr

Michael Farr joined the Charlotte Hall Veterans Home on September 10, 2008 as Deputy Director, Veterans Home Program. Mike had briefly worked at Charlotte Hall in 2006/2007 for the management services contractor as Assistant Director of Maintenance. Prior to that, Mike had worked for thirty-seven years for Pepco/Mirant in various roles in the electrical power generating stations, retiring July, 2006. Mike began state employment in April, 2007 with the Department of Juvenile Services as Maintenance Supervisor IV at the Cheltenham Youth Facility and remained in that position until returning to Charlotte Hall.

Mike also served in the Maryland Army National Guard, 121st Battalion of Engineers, from 1969 to 1975, attaining the rank of Staff Sergeant, E6. Mike is a life-long resident of St. Mary's County, Maryland and currently resides in Mechanicsville with his wife, Mary. When the weather permits, you can find them on their motorcycle, traveling with family and friends.

## Enhanced VA Mortgage Options Available

**V**eterans with conventional home loans now have new options for refinancing to a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) guaranteed home loan. The new law makes changes to VA's home loan refinancing program. Veterans who wish to refinance their subprime or conventional mortgage may now do so for up to 100 percent of the value of the property.

Additionally, congress raised VA's maximum loan amount for these types of refinancing loans. The new legislation allows for loans up to \$729,750 depending on the location of the property. Increasing the loan-to-value ratio and raising the maximum loan amount

will allow more qualified veterans to refinance through VA, allowing for savings on interest costs or even potentially avoiding foreclosure.

Originally set to expire at the end of October, 2008, VA's authority to guaranty Adjustable Rate Mortgages (ARMs) and Hybrid ARMs was also extended under this new law through September 30, 2012. Unlike conventional ARMs and hybrid ARMs, VA limits interest rate increases on these loans from year to year, as well as over the life of the loan.

For more information, or to obtain help from a VA Loan Specialist, veterans may call 1-877-827-3702 or visit [www.homeloans.va.gov](http://www.homeloans.va.gov).

## Veterans Salute the Flag

Veterans and active-duty military not in uniform can now render the military-style hand salute during the playing of the national anthem, thanks to changes in federal law that took effect in October, 2008.

The new provision improves upon a little known change in federal law last year that authorized veterans to render the military-style hand salute during the raising, lowering or passing of the flag, but it did not address salutes during the national anthem. Last year's provision also applies to members of the armed forces while not in uniform.

## Veteran Musters

MDVA will be hosting monthly veteran musters in every county in Maryland. Here are the dates for those already scheduled:

### January 24, 2009

#### Baltimore County

American Legion Post 38  
Dundalk, MD

### February 21, 2009

#### Wicomico County

American Legion Post 64  
Salisbury, MD

### March 14, 2009

#### Howard County

Howard Co. Community College  
Columbia, MD

### April 25, 2009

#### Frederick County

American Legion Post 11  
Frederick, MD

**Look for the Lieutenant Governor at an upcoming muster.**

For more details go to our website [www.mdva.state.md.us](http://www.mdva.state.md.us).



# The American Veterans and Servicemembers Survival Guide

Veterans for America is proud to release The American Veterans and Servicemembers Survival Guide to better serve those who have served all of us. It is free and available for download at <http://www.veteransforamerica.org>.

The new Survival Guide is a follow-up to the 1985 bestseller, The Viet Vet Survival Guide. Just as the earlier book was a must-read for Vietnam veterans, the new book will prove an invaluable resource for the 1.7 million servicemembers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, the 24 million veterans of past conflicts and the families of all our troops and veterans. Unlike the earlier guide, the new Survival Guide is free.

The new book is as much a roadmap as a reference manual, detailing the benefits, assistance and resources avail-

able as well as step-by-step directions for navigating the bureaucracies that serve our troops and veterans. The new Survival Guide contains 28 chapters, including 17 for veterans and their families and 11 for active-duty servicemembers, National Guard members and reservists and their families. From legal to health services, job assistance to women's issues, the new Survival Guide is designed to meet everyone's needs.

What you will find in the new Survival Guide includes:

- Chapter 3, "Service-Connected Compensation", provides indispensable guidance for those suffering from PTSD and other psychological wounds and have questions or concerns about what they're owed by the military.

- Chapter 11, "Employment, Self-Employment and the Small Business Administration", covers issues for those veterans working to establish a business or seeking a job.

With far more women in the ranks than ever before, the new Survival Guide deals head-on with the problems of sexual discrimination, harassment and assault. The chapter for women in the military details how to report harassment and other problems. It also helps military families deal with the problems that occur with the deployment of one or both parents.

This is only a fraction of the information and resources inside The American Veterans and Servicemembers Survival Guide.

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## Department of Defense Launches National Resource Directory For Wounded Warriors, Families And Caregivers

On November 17, 2008 the Department of Defense launched the National Resource Directory, a collab-

orative effort between the Departments of Defense, Labor and Veterans Affairs.

The directory is a Web-based network of care coordinators, providers and support partners with resources for wounded, ill and injured service members, veterans, their families, families of the fallen and those who support them.

Located at <http://www.nationalresourcedirectory.org>, the directory offers more than 10,000 medical and non-medical services and resources to help service members and veterans achieve personal and professional goals along their journey from recovery through rehabilitation to community reintegration.

This directory is a combination of federal, state, and community-based resources that will serve as a tremen-

dous asset for all service members, veterans, their families and those who care for them. The community is essential to the successful reintegration of our veterans.

The National Resource Directory is organized into six major categories: Benefits and Compensation; Education, Training and Employment; Family and Caregiver Support; Health; Housing and Transportation; and Services and Resources. It also provides helpful checklists, Frequently Asked Questions, and connections to peer support groups. All information on the Web site can be found through a general or state and local search tool.

Again, the website to access the directory can be found at: [www.nationalresourcedirectory.org](http://www.nationalresourcedirectory.org).

### MDVA MEMORIAL DAY EVENTS

#### 25 MAY Memorial Day Observed

Cheltenham Veterans Cemetery  
Crownsville Veterans Cemetery  
Garrison Forest Veterans Cemetery  
Rocky Gap Veterans Cemetery  
Korean War Memorial  
Vietnam War Memorial

#### 30 MAY Memorial Day

Eastern Shore Veterans Cemetery  
Charlotte Hall Veterans Home

# University of Maryland Veterans Initiative

**A**s increasing numbers of veterans return from the service, some with special challenges, it is clear that universities have an obligation to help them with the transition to college life. The University of Maryland Veterans Initiative provides the incentive and support necessary to help veterans achieve their academic and personal goals and enhance the support offered by the GI Bill.

The University of Maryland believes it is a privilege and a responsibility to provide the best possible opportunity for veterans to obtain the education and skills they desire. These men and women have made enormous sacrifices for our nation, and the University takes pride in promoting their readjustment to academic and civilian life and their continued success. Dr. Marsha Guenzler-Stevens, Director of Campus Activities, explains, "Student veterans face issues beyond those of the average student. The University has the unique capability to address their concerns and needs and make a difference in their lives and those of their families through the Veterans Initiative."

To date, the University of Maryland has made great progress on this initiative, including:

- Development of a University-wide task force to advocate for veterans and to coordinate services.
- Creation of a successful veteran student organization, TerpVets, to

provide community and fellowship to our student veterans.

- Establishment of policies for deployed students to use university e-mail accounts.
- Provision of mental health services and specialized training for mental health service providers.
- Creation of a Veterans Program Office to advise the veteran student organization, create community and enhance communication.
- Initiation of a veteran's week series of events which includes programs, forums and service to the community, public recognition of the services of our veteran students and alumni, and increased awareness of our veteran's initiatives on campus.
- Development of a relationship with veteran alumni to engage them as mentors for our current veteran students.
- Creation of new relationships with community-based and VA-based services to benefit student veterans.

In order to continue our progress, the University of Maryland is working to raise funds for Veterans Scholarships. Current scholarships, GI Benefits and other federal assistance do not meet costs for students. Without support, student veterans either must work significant hours or incur onerous debt burdens to pay full tuition, fees, and living costs. In addition, the University is working to raise funds for a

Veterans Initiatives Fund which will provide much needed financial support to our comprehensive efforts aimed at improving the transition to UM and the quality of each student's experience while on campus. Key priorities of the Veterans Initiatives Fund include: veterans programming, coordination of services, outreach and recognition efforts, student organization support and mental health, and social and family services support.

For more information on the University of Maryland Veterans Initiatives, please contact: University of Maryland Veterans Program Office at [umdvet-eransorg@umd.edu](mailto:umdvet-eransorg@umd.edu); 301-314-7174; [www.veterans.umd.edu](http://www.veterans.umd.edu)



University of Maryland Honors Student, Faculty and Employee Veterans during Veterans' Week Activities

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## Veterans Memorial Museum in Charles County

**C**harles County has established a committee to plan, construct and administer a Memorial Museum to honor Maryland Veterans of all wars. The museum will be located in southern Maryland; the 18,000 square foot building is currently being modified and renovated to accommodate the museum.

The Maryland Veterans Memorial Museum Committee, a 501(c)(3) organization, encourages all Veterans and Veteran Organizations to become part of the planning and development of this new museum.

For more information contact Cindy Keesea at 301-932-1900 or visit their website: [www.mdvets.cc](http://www.mdvets.cc)

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2009

- 1 JAN** New Years Day
- 14 JAN** MD General Assembly  
convenes
- 19 JAN** Martin Luther King, Jr.  
Day Observed
- 20 JAN** Presidential Inauguration
- 27 JAN** MD Veterans  
Commission Quarterly  
meeting
- 16 FEB** President's Day Observed
- 25 MAR** Maryland Day
- 21 APR** MD Veterans  
Commission Quarterly  
meeting
- 16 MAY** Armed Forces Day
- 25 MAY** Memorial Day Observed
- 6 JUN** 65th Anniversary of D-Day
- 14 JUN** Flag Day/US Army  
Birthday

## *Maryland Department of Veterans Affairs...* *Proudly Serving Maryland Veterans*

Office of the Secretary .....	866-793-1577
Outreach & Advocacy .....	866-793-1577
Cemetery & Memorial Programs.....	410-923-6981
Charlotte Hall Veterans Home .....	800-522-8387

### VETERANS SERVICE PROGRAM & CLAIMS ASSISTANCE

Baltimore .....	800-446-4926 x6450
Bel Air.....	410-836-4900
Camp Springs .....	301-248-0463
Cumberland .....	301-759-5251
Frederick.....	301-694-2155
Hagerstown .....	301-791-0356
Hurlock (Eastern Shore).....	866-497-3684

Read previous issues of The Maryland Veteran  
**[www.mdva.state.md.us/html/newsletters.html](http://www.mdva.state.md.us/html/newsletters.html)**

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